

small business create additional jobs. On the top of the list was passage of Association Health Plans.

Three months later, on July 26, 2005, the House passed Association Health Plans with a wide margin of 263-153.

I applaud the Senate for taking up this important debate today, and I urge them to act now to pass Association Health Plans.

MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, the May 15 Medicare part D enrollment deadline is now 6 days away; but a significant number of eligible beneficiaries do not even know that. The enrollment deadline is 6 days away, and eligible beneficiaries don't know about the penalty fee they would incur for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the enrollment deadline is 6 days away, but call centers are still giving eligible beneficiaries inaccurate or incomplete information. This Sunday, sons and daughters should be spending time with their mothers taking them to brunch or showering them with gifts, not trying to navigate a complex Web site or holding onto the phone.

The administration's insistence on this deadline is offensive to millions of Medicare beneficiaries. Many of them are telling me just that, and many are the most vulnerable in our society.

I urge my colleagues to press for extending the deadline for part D enrollment. We owe it to the unenrolled seniors and seniors who are disabled, who need more time to figure out this complex program. We owe it to all beneficiaries so that we can continue fixing the many flaws of the Medicare prescription drug plan.

THE HERO ACT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1499, the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities Act. I introduced this bill after learning our current Tax Code prohibits many of our men and women serving in combat zones from taking advantage of individual retirement accounts.

Most of our troops serving in these combat zones are paid in wages designated as military hazard pay. These wages are not taxed, nor should they be. However, since this compensation is nontaxable, the wages are not eligible for IRA contributions. IRAs are an excellent tool for responsible retirement savings.

Our troops defending America in harm's way should not be excluded from full participation in this impor-

tant investment opportunity because of a glitch in our Tax Code.

The HERO Act will correct this glitch by designating combat hazard pay earned by members of the Armed Forces as eligible for contribution to retirement accounts. This bill has been endorsed by the Reserve Officers Association and the MOAA.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important bill this afternoon and give our troops the opportunity they deserve to save for their future.

MEDICARE PART D DEADLINE

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to call attention to the May 15 deadline for seniors to enroll in the Medicare part D prescription drug plan. The fact is, seniors who are eligible for Medicare part D who do not sign up by May 15 will face a higher monthly premium if they enroll at a later time. This puts a lot of pressure on the seniors.

I had a town hall meeting and lots of seniors came. Most of them knew nothing about how to do it or did not understand it.

But, seniors, as hard as we have tried, we cannot extend this deadline beyond May 15. There are nearly 48,000 residents aged 65 and older in Dallas, Texas. Not that many came to the town hall, but quite a few. I am concerned that they are not getting the message.

Missing May 15 may have expensive consequences. We would like to have a bit more compassion. America's health is about more than just numbers on an insurance company's roll book.

SIX DAYS AWAY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 6 days. In just 6 days, that is when the deadline for the Medicare prescription drug program is: May 15.

Thirty million Americans have already signed up. However, there remain other seniors who would benefit from this voluntary program, and they should take these next few days to see if Medicare part D is right for them.

To help facilitate the enrollment process in my district, I have held Medicare seminars to educate seniors on the options available, including two just last Friday. Many have said they are happy with the choices they have, and they are grateful for the time we took to sit down and explain this new program.

Yesterday I also had the chance to visit two pharmacies in my district and speak with the pharmacists and their staffs. This offered a great, behind-the-scenes look at the process these phar-

macists have used to help local seniors understand and utilize this new prescription drug plan.

The general sense is that the kinks have been worked out and most seniors are truly gaining great benefit, better health.

Over the next 6 days, I urge all of my colleagues in Congress to do all that we can to provide seniors whatever assistance they may require to sign up for and navigate their new plan.

MEDICARE PART D AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Medicare part D plan, as written, in my opinion is bad for Latino seniors. Latinos are less likely to have worked at firms with employer-provided pension plans, tend to work at a lower-paying job resulting in less accumulated savings and smaller Social Security checks. And 62 percent have incomes below 150 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Yet more than 1 million Latino seniors have not yet even enrolled in this program because of cultural, language and economic barriers. That is more than 30 percent of all eligible Latino seniors who lack coverage.

The lack of detailed, easy-to-understand culturally competent information makes it even more difficult for community organizations to focus resources on this vulnerable population. Our Latino seniors and all seniors need our help.

I urge my colleagues to pass legislation to extend the enrollment deadline, take away the fear of penalty, and give Medicare beneficiaries more time to check their facts, know their options, and make informed decisions about part D.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL RESTRAINT

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Webster's dictionary defines emergencies as serious situations or occurrences that happen unexpectedly and demand immediate attention.

As Congress considers this year's emergency supplemental spending bill, I hope all of my colleagues will remember the definition of an emergency and support Majority Leader BOEHNER's strong efforts to ensure that we spend taxpayer money on America's most urgent needs.

Last week I was proud when he clearly articulated that the House will not take up an emergency supplemental bill that spends \$1 more than the President's budget request. By declaring that Congress will use this funding for